

VZCZCXRO3705

OO RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHGR RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHMT
RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC
DE RUEHTG #1281 3451359
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 111359Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1303
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR JTF-BRAVO IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 001281

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: FEMALE REPRESENTATION DECREASES IN CONGRESS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1267

¶1. (U) Summary. Election results issued by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) showed that the National Congress will maintain its traditional plurality of male representatives. The next 128-seat legislature will likely contain 25 congresswomen, comprising 19.53 percent of the total congressional seats; this is a decrease from the 31 congresswomen elected in the 2005 general election. In 2000, the Law of Equal Opportunities for Women established a goal of female political representation at 30 percent, a figure which has not been reached since the law's introduction. End Summary.

¶2. (U) According to figures issued by the Honduran National Institute of Statistics (INE), the current population of Honduras is estimated at 7,876,197 with 3,993,466 females and 3,882,731 males. In the 2001 and 2005 general elections, 51 percent of eligible voters were female. Despite the population's female majority, prior to the 2005 general election, male representatives consistently held more than 90 percent of the seats in Congress.

¶3. (U) Congressional results released by the TSE on December 8 (see reftel) showed that the next legislature will likely include 25 congresswomen, garnering 19.53 percent of the seats in Congress. This marks a decrease from the 31 female representatives elected in 2005 who held 24.22 percent of the congressional seats. However, overall female representation in the legislature has steadily increased since the nation's first democratic general election in 1981. A report from the National Women's Institute of Honduras (INAM) imparts that in 1981 congresswomen comprised just 2.4 percent of the Congress, while from 1985 to 2001 between 6-10 percent of the congressional seats were held by women.

¶4. (U) Female representation in the next legislature will consist of: 15 National Party congresswomen, eight Liberal Party congresswomen, and one congresswoman each from the Christian Democratic Party and the Democratic Unification Party. None of the female candidates from the Social Democratic Innovation and Unity Party (PINU) were elected to Congress. Only ten of the elected representatives were incumbent candidates. Female candidates appeared to fare better in areas with a large urban population, as 14 of the elected congresswomen originated from the populous departments of Francisco Morazan and Cortes. Of the total 628 candidates on the congressional ballots, 191 of the candidates were female, comprising 30.41 percent of the field. The three small parties had a higher concentration of

female candidates than the two major parties; the proportion of female candidates on each party's ballots translated to: 25 percent for the National Party, 21.88 percent for the Liberal Party, 35.16 percent for the Christian Democratic Party, 36.22 percent for the PINU Party, and 34.19 percent for the Democratic Unification Party.

15. (U) The Law of Equal Opportunities for Women, signed into effect on April 11, 2000, established a goal of female political representation at 30 percent. Article 81 of the law lists the popularly elected positions considered in determining the representation of women; these positions include: congressional representatives and alternate congressional representatives, representatives to the Central American Parliament, mayors, vice-mayors, and elected positions in city councils. The 30 percent figure was established as a minimum base, that would "progressively increase until equity between men and women is achieved." Since the law's introduction, the baseline goal has not been met, and the law provides no inducements for success or sanctions for failure to reach its desired proportion.

LLORENS